

# EPA Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

## *Wausau, WI*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

**EPA's** Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

### BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the City of Wausau for a Brownfields Pilot. The City of Wausau, population 38,881, was incorporated in 1872 as a lumber mill town. The Wisconsin River provided the fledgling community access to transportation and a source of power for an expanding pulp and paper industry along the downtown river corridor.

Improvements to highways and a declining paper industry has forced economic development in Wausau to be located elsewhere. The city is currently 11.2 percent minority, and 10.9 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. The downtown river corridor is an area that has a high crime rate, a condition which is particularly troubling given the number of children living in the area. As the city's economy has declined, many businesses have closed or relocated, leaving behind blighted, underused, and/or potentially contaminated property. The perception of environmental contamination in the downtown corridor is currently hindering development from occurring.

### PILOT SNAPSHOT



*Wausau, WI*

**Date of Announcement:**  
May 2000

**Amount:** \$200,000

**Profile:** The city will target brownfields within the blighted downtown river corridor.

#### Contacts:

Office of the Mayor  
City of Wausau  
(715) 261-6800

Regional Brownfields Team  
U.S. EPA - Region 5  
(312) 353-3161

Visit the EPA Region 5 Brownfields web site at:

**<http://www.epa.gov/R5Brownfields/>**

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:

**<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>**

## OBJECTIVES

The city intends to revitalize the downtown corridor. To help reach this goal, the Pilot will fund environmental site assessments on potential brownfield sites along the downtown river corridor. If contamination is present, the city will work with the property owners to minimize the impact on public health and redevelop the sites as appropriate. The city will also work with property owners to obtain access and easements for the expansion of the river's edge trail in the targeted area.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as a part of this Pilot include:

- Conducting Phase I environmental assessments on up to 40 properties in the downtown river corridor;
- Conducting Phase II environmental assessments on specific properties needing additional investigation; and
- Preparing and implementing a community awareness and action plan relating to the targeted brownfields area.

*The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.*